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The dawn of a new era

Dr Adam Gledhill discusses the future of The Sport and Exercise Scientist

The Sport and Exercise Scientist (TSES) is the official publication of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES). It is consistently the BASES member benefit that we most value. I, like many of you, have enjoyed reading TSES over the years, and it is my great honour and privilege to become your new Editor of TSES. I start this journey with you feeling a blended sense of pride, vulnerability, humility and enthusiasm. I hope I serve you well.

Standing on the shoulders of giants

The success of TSES sits on the shoulders of previous leaders and contributors. It is with great appreciation that we must thank you, Dr Claire Hitchings FBases, for your stewardship of 30 issues of TSES. Claire: your tenure saw an evolution of TSES. You brought in regular columnists and features, you gave columnists the respected literary freedom that their expertise afforded, and you supported articles to engage our audience: your clear vision has been a major factor in developing a publication that our community values. More personally, I would like to thank you, Claire, for your support during my transition into the TSES hot seat. That support was invaluable.

Is it new? Is it true? Does it change what we do?

I have been fortunate over the past few years to serve as an Associate Editor with the British Journal of Sports Medicine. A key guiding principle I learned very quickly in that role is a motto comprising of three key questions: Is it new? Is it true? Does it change what we do? Those questions are important for prospective TSES contributors. Of course, TSES is a different type of publication but our standards for TSES remain that we want to publish articles that will support and develop you, the BASES community. We want TSES to stimulate and influence your thoughts, feelings, and actions towards different topics that impact on your work as applied practitioners, researchers and educators within sport and exercise science. As a BASES community, we have a collective responsibility to each other to ensure that we achieve these standards.

The most dangerous phrase in the world is “we’ve always done it this way”

The statement above has real meaning for me. I always strive – perhaps too much at times – for improvement. However, as my mother always told me: “Adam, make sure you don’t throw the baby out with the bath water!” Wise words, Mum! I’m fortunate to be surrounded by great people on our Editorial Advisory Board. They have been open with me about what works, but also where we can improve and change what we do. As a result, you can still look forward to reading some of the regular TSES columns and features, but we’ll also be bringing in some new ideas. The work of the BASES Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group (EDI-AG) will have a home in TSES. As a starting point, I was delighted when Dr Kotryna Fraser, Chair of the BASES EDI-AG, agreed to contribute the Final Word feature for this issue. We’ve also been looking at ways you can engage with discussion and debate about TSES articles beyond letters to the editor: watch this space!

The role of TSES in addressing the challenges we face in sport and exercise science

We almost made it through without mentioning COVID-19! However, COVID-19 has impacted on, and continues to impact on, everything we do in sport and exercise science. TSES responded to the pandemic by giving authors a platform to provide direction and solutions to real-world problems.

Events during COVID-19 also shone an even brighter spotlight on challenges that we already knew to exist: the importance of sports clubs in the development of young people; physical inactivity; how we optimally return athletes to sport after a period of inactivity; mental health; gender inequality; racial injustice...I could go on. TSES gives you, the BASES community, the platform to discuss how sport and exercise science can make a difference to these societal challenges. I’m delighted that this Summer 2021 issue of TSES starts to address some of these key priorities.

In closing

I hope you all enjoy the Summer '21 edition of TSES. It has been a pleasure working with the team to develop it. I'm always happy to receive your feedback and suggestions, so please do get in touch: editor@bases.org.uk

Dr Adam Gledhill FBASES

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